

# Corps to study health of six LSU-area lakes

## Algae blooms, erosion, adjacent roads among topics

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has begun the feasibility study to examine what it will take to get six lakes in the area of City Park and LSU healthy.

The lakes in question are University, City Park, Campus, College, Crest and Erie lakes primarily located on and between City Park and the LSU campus.

One of the problems with the lakes is the algae blooms that occur in the summer.

These algae blooms can help rob the shallow lakes of oxygen as the algae dies and decomposes, which leads to the periodic fish kills seen at some of the lakes.

The last lake dredging was done in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The material that was taken out of the lake was used to provide the foundation for Baton Rouge beach.

Other problems include the shoreline erosions along some of the lake banks, the quality of the water in the lakes and even recreational problems with small, or no, shoulders that force walkers and cars to share the same small road.

The Corps of Engineers held a public meeting in August to get input on what they should look at in developing the feasibility study.

At that meeting, people living around the lakes gave their suggestions for the lake's restoration. Ideas included dredging the lakes and constructing ways to stabilize the lake banks that are eroding in some places.

"We're going to look at the entire lake system and see what needs to be done to clean it up," said Casey Couture, project manager for the Army Corps of Engineers. That will include water quality, wildlife and recreation potentials, she said.

"It's pretty open at this time," Couture said.

Couture said it's important that people realize that even with the hurricane repair work that the corps is doing this year, other projects are still moving forward.

The funding for the study is being awarded by Congress from year to year, she said. The project got \$84,000 last year and the Corps of Engineers is asking for about \$400,000 for the coming fiscal year, Couture said.

The total estimated cost for the feasibility study is about \$600,000, which includes engineering, environmental consideration, real estate

consideration and other factors, she said.

The feasibility study is paid in full by federal funding.

The completion of the feasibility study basically depends on the amount of funding that's allowed through Congress, Couture said.

However, if funding continues, the study could be completed in 12 to 18 months, she said.